

The President's Weekly Address

September 10, 2016

Fifteen years ago, a September day that began like any other became one of the darkest in our Nation's history. The Twin Towers were reduced to rubble. The Pentagon was in flames. A Pennsylvania field burned with the wreckage of an airplane. And nearly 3,000 innocent lives were lost: sons and daughters, husbands and wives, neighbors and colleagues and friends. They were from all walks of life, all races and religions, all colors and creeds, from across America and around the world.

This weekend, we honor their memory once more. We stand with the survivors who still bear the scars of that day. We thank the first responders who risked everything to save others. And we salute a generation of Americans—our men and women in uniform, diplomats, and our intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals—who serve, and in some cases have given their lives, to help keep us safe.

A lot has changed over these past 15 years. We've delivered devastating blows to the Al Qaida leaders that attacked us on 9/11. We delivered justice to Usama bin Laden. We've strengthened our homeland security. We've prevented attacks. We've saved lives.

At the same time, the terrorist threat has evolved, as we've seen so tragically from Boston to Chattanooga, from San Bernardino to Orlando. So in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and beyond, we'll stay relentless against terrorists like Al Qaida and ISIL. We will destroy them. And we'll keep doing everything in our power to protect our homeland.

As we reflect on these past 15 years, it's also important to remember what has not changed: the core values that define us as Americans, the resilience that sustains us. After all, terrorists will never be able to defeat the United States. Their only hope is to terrorize us into changing who we are or our way of life. That's why we Americans will never give in to fear. It's why this weekend we remember the true spirit of 9/11. We're still the America of heroes who ran into harm's way, of ordinary folks who took down the hijackers, of families who turned their pain into hope. We are still the America that looks out for one another, bound by our shared belief that I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper.

In the face of terrorism, how we respond matters. We cannot give in to those who would divide us. We can't react in ways that erode the fabric of our society. Because it's our diversity, our welcoming of all talents, our treating of everybody fairly—no matter their race, gender, ethnicity, or faith—that's part of what makes our country great. It's what makes us resilient. And if we stay true to those values, we'll uphold the legacy of those we've lost, and keep our Nation strong and free.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:10 a.m. on August 26 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on September 10. In the address, the President referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 9, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 10. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Subjects: Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist organization; Terrorism : Global threat; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Terrorism : September 11, 2001, attacks.

DCPD Number: DCPD201600578.